

## DESCRIPTION OF A NEW AUSTRALIAN EEL.

BY J. DOUGLAS OGILBY.

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GYMNOTHORAX PRIONODON, sp.nov.

Length of head  $3\frac{1}{3}$ , height of body (above the vent) 9 in the trunk; length of trunk  $1\frac{1}{8}$  in that of the tail. Eye of moderate size, its diameter three-fourths of the length of the snout, to the tip of which it is much nearer than to the angle of the mouth: snout short, compressed, and transversely truncated, its length one-seventh of that of the head: anterior nasal tube short, about three-sevenths of the diameter of the eye; posterior nostril an oblong slit, situated above the orbit, and surrounded by a low rim, its length one-third of the gill-opening. A series of three large pores along each ramus. Cleft of mouth of moderate size,  $2\frac{2}{5}$  in the length of the head; the mouth can be completely closed. Occipital region elevated, fleshy. Gill-openings narrow, four-fifths of the diameter of the eye. Teeth in the jaws uniserial, acute; the anterior teeth in the upper jaw the longest, serrated on the basal half posteriorly: vomer edentulous: mandibular teeth entire, about fourteen on each ramus, the three front ones enlarged and subulate, the lateral ones subequal.

General colour (*in alcohol*) rich yellowish-brown, the fins darker; undersurface and sides of the head and the throat livid gray, the latter with numerous narrow, brown, longitudinal streaks; entire body and dorsal fin with round or oblong whitish or pale blue spots, not exceeding the orbit in size; they are small and faint on the opercular region, beyond which they do not extend; on the dorsal they are concurrent across the margin.

The species above described belongs to the old collection of Australian Fishes, and was labelled "*Anguilla, sp., Port Jackson.*" It is closely allied to the Atlantic *G. ocellatus*, Agass., (Rio Janeiro to Florida and Texas) from which it differs in its much smaller head—*prionodon*  $\frac{3}{16}$ , *ocellatus*  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the trunk—in the

greater number of mandibular canines—*prionodon* 3, *ocellatus* 1 in each ramus—with some minor characters.

I at one time thought that the species might prove to be Schneider's *G. wilsoni* (see Günther, Catal. Fish. viii. p. 93), but his description is insufficient to determine the point with accuracy.

Some of the anterior maxillary teeth being serrated, it falls into Kaup's restricted genus *Priodonopsis*, but as these serrations, according to Jordan and Davis (Rep. U.S. Fish Comm. pp. 589 and 607, 1888) disappear with age, that genus becomes synonymous with *Gymnothorax*.

The length of the specimen is 322 millimetres.

*Type* in the Australian Museum, Sydney.

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